



For Immediate Release

Riverside Metropolitan Museum

Contact Denise Brennan, Deputy Museum Director
951-826-5123

Event: The Riverside Metropolitan Museum Celebrates its 80th Anniversary!

Date: *August 4, 2005, during Riverside's Arts Walk, 6:30-9:00 PM*

Place: Riverside Metropolitan Museum, 3580 Mission Inn Avenue

We're 80 Years Old!!!!

...And have a new name,

The Riverside Municipal Museum has officially become the

RIVERSIDE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM...

Join the Riverside Metropolitan Museum in celebrating 80 years of programs and stewardship in the community!

Witness the official re-naming of the Museum with Mayor Ron Loveridge, watch the powerful Taiko drumming program and tour RMM galleries with professional Museum Curators.

"It's a time to celebrate the Museum's past as well as its expansion into the future," says Deputy Museum Director Denise Brennan. The Metropolitan title signifies the Museum's growing reach, responsibilities and vision for the Riverside Community here in the heart of the Historic Downtown Riverside. Director, Dr. Vince Moses notes, "Riverside is growing fast as a community, and so are we. The growth our community is experiencing has implications for the quality of life here, both environmentally and culturally, for good and otherwise." In the midst of these rapid developments the mission of the Museum is to preserve the cultural and natural heritage of the City and vicinity, and to provoke thought about the history of this change, and it's meaning for the metropolitan area the Museum serves.

The Museum's stewardship responsibilities recently took on a national profile with the acquisition of the Harada House National Historic Landmark in August 2004. "This property and the story it tells go directly to the heart of what it means to be an American under the 14th Amendment," Moses said, "and our stewardship of the site adds to the City's mission of building an inclusive community."

Museum History:

Initially known as the Cornelius Earle Rumsey Indian Collection, the Museum opened in the basement of City Hall on December 12, 1924, when the widow of National Biscuit Company (NABISCO) magnate Cornelius Earle Rumsey donated his collection of Native American artifacts to the City of Riverside. An ordinance, amending the City Charter and establishing a Municipal Museum, was adopted by the City Council on **August 27, 1925**.

The current ordinance states that, "All collections and exhibits of the Museum shall generally reflect but shall not necessarily be limited to the specific interpretations of the history, natural

history and anthropology of the City and County of Riverside and the immediate environs of southern California."

Presently:

The Riverside Metropolitan Museum serves as the principal cultural and natural history Museum in the region, Moses says, the Metropolitan Museum has come to recognize that its responsibilities have vastly expanded, while the physical configuration has not. The last major expansion took place at the current Downtown site forty years ago, leaving the Museum today woefully short of the space necessary to meet the accelerating demand from the regional population, and to care properly for its growing collections. "Riverside City Council has recognized the role of an expanded Museum in place-making for Riverside" Moses states, "and has mandated an architectural feasibility study, by Ratio Architects of Indianapolis, Indiana, to determine where and how the Metropolitan Museum can best build the experience-based regional Museum people demand, and that the City wants for its role as the hub of culture and the arts in this area.

History of the Museum Building:

On the National Register of Historic Places, the Museum was originally built as **Riverside's Federal Post Office**. It also housed the headquarters of the United States Department of Agriculture, very important to the local navel orange growers. During World War II, the Fourth Air Force occupied the building briefly. It operated as a dormitory for servicemen on leave, and headquarter of the War Ration Board. In 1945, the City of Riverside bought the building, and soon moved the **Police Department** into the top floors, and for awhile a division of the Public Works Department occupied the second floor.

By 1948, the Cornelius Earle Rumsey Indian Museum, strapped for space in City Hall across Orange Street, had transferred much of its growing collections into the basement. In the early fifties, the Museum Board urged City fathers to float a bond issue for a new Police facility, so that the Museum could take over the entire building. Their efforts took a few years to reach fruition, but the **Municipal Museum** assumed control of the whole structure in 1965. The grand opening of the new galleries came in January 1966.

The Riverside Metropolitan Museum serves a broad and diverse community eager to understand the region's complex cultural and natural history. As a center for scholarship and experiential learning about the past, present and future cultures of Riverside, and the region's natural resources. The RMM maintains extensive collections in an effort to preserve and steward these resources for future generations.

To learn more about the Museum's plans for expansion and view the Museum's new programs and exhibitions, visit the Metropolitan Museums website at www.riversideca.gov/museum.

The Metropolitan Museum also lists events and programs at the new InlandArts website at www.inlandarts.com.